

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

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1/14/74 EXT. 23511

APPROVED BY IO:MR. TELLEEN

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R 151135Z JAN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL MONTREAL

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FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO USSOUTHCOM PANCANAL FROM
PANAMA 12 DEC 73:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 6689

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, PN, PQ, WMO, GT, ICAO

SUBJ: WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION REGION IV MEETING

REF: STATE 236572 AND 237092; PANAMA A-124 OF JUNE 6, 1973;
STATE 134153

SUMMARY: IN EMBASSY VIEW, FOUR-LETTER ICAO STATION IDENTIFY-
ING SYMBOLS SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE CHANGED FROM "CANAL
ZONE" TO "PANAMA" FOR LISTING OF STATIONS IN WMO BASIC
SYNOPTIC NETWORK. TO DO SO WOULD IMPLY PANAMANIAN JURIS-
DICTION IN CANAL ZONE WHICH ISSUE IS DEPENDENT UPON NEW
TREATY RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. FOR REASONS ANALOGOUS TO PROBLEM WHICH AROSE WITH GOP
OVER DESIGNATION OF RADIO FREQUENCIES UNDER MONTREAUX CON-
VENTION, BEMBASSY BELIEVES THAT WE SHOULD RESIST CHANGING
MANNER OF LISTING STATION IDENTIFIERS FOR BASIC SYNOPTIC
NETWORK (SEE PANAMA A-124).

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2. AS WE UNDERSTAND SITUATION WHICH CAME UP AT WMO REGION IV MEETING, PANAMANIAN DELEGATE INSISTED THAT ICAO FOUR-LETTER IDENTIFIERS FOR "CANAL ZONE" BE CHANGED TO READ "PANAMA," ASSUMING THAT CHANGE FROM LETTER "B" TO "P" WOULD CONSTITUTE THIS DISTINCTION. POSITION OF DELEGATE WAS CONSISTENT WITH GOP POLICY OF PUSHING "SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE" WHENEVER POSSIBLE. APPARENTLY WMO AGREED TO ADOPT ANY CHANGES MADE BY ICAO AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

3. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO) FOUR-LETTER IDENTIFIERS, SUCH AS "MBFS", ORIGINALLY DID NOT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANCE. "M" WAS USED AS FIRST LETTER FOR ALL AIR TERMINALS IN THIS AREA WHILE "BFS" WAS ARBITRARY DESIGNATION, FOR EXAMPLE, TO REPRESENT "BALBOA-FORT SHERMAN." IT HAS SINCE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY GOP THAT SECOND LETTER, "B", IS TRADITIONAL SYMBOL FOR USG FACILITIES WITHIN CANAL ZONE. BECAUSE OF THIS ASSOCIATION, CHANGING SECOND LETTER, "B" (US CONTROL) TO "P" (PANAMA CONTROL), WOULD PLACE USG (PARTICULARLY FAA) IN UNTENABLE POSITION IN DEALING WITH PANAMANIAN CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION (DIRECCION DE AERONAUTICA CIVIL - DAC). UNDER 1949 BILATERAL AIR TRAFFIC AGREEMENT, FAA-BALBOA PROVIDES AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL OVER AREA INCLUDING ALL OF REPUBLIC OF PANAMA. BECAUSE OF IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND JURISDICTION, EMBASSY ALSO INFORMED THAT FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE ANY CHANGES IN PRESENT STATION IDENTIFIERS.

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT, IF SUBJECT OF FOUR-LETTER STATION IDENTIFIERS COMES UP IN LISTING BASIC SYNOPTIC NETWORK, ANY PROPOSAL TO CHANGE IDENTIFIERS FROM "CANAL ZONE" TO "PANAMA" BE OPPOSED FOR SAME REASON THAT USG RESISTED GOP ASSERTION OF RIGHT TO ASSIGN RADIO FREQUENCIES IN CANAL ZONE UNDER MONTREAUX CONVENTION. SAYRE UNQUOTE RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, WEATHER STATIONS, RADIO FREQUENCIES, AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE008407
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: REALDERMAN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740140/aaaablx1.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 236572 AND 237092; PANAMA A-12, 4 OF JUNE 6, 1973;
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <23 MAY 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION REGION IV MEETING
TAGS: TGEN, PN, PQ, GT, US, WMO, ICAO, FAA
To: MONTREAL
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005